

FACTS AND FANCIES FOR WOMAN AND THE HOME CIRCLE

THE DAILY SHORT STORY

The Name of Roberts.

By LINCOLN ROTHBLUM.
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"NELL, I declare," ejaculated dainty Madeline Sommers as a pretty frown marred the smooth whiteness of her forehead. "Just listen to this letter from Ralph, mother, and tell me if it isn't the most extraordinary thing you ever heard!" And with an abused manner, she read aloud:

"Dear Sis—I know you will be as disappointed as I am to learn that Lieut. Roberts will not approve my furlough. He is commanding officer while the captain is in the hospital, and says that if I were to go home now it would leave the company without a mechanic, as there is no one else in the company qualified to do such work. So we will have to pocket our disappointment and wait for a more favorable opportunity. Love from your brother—RALPH"

"Ralph is right," Mrs. Sommers answered soothingly as she industriously continued to knit the wool which was gradually and surprisingly assuming the form of a sweater, "and if he is needed there it would be unpatriotic to have him go."

"But, mother, can't you understand that I want him home for the military ball? It won't seem like a real dance unless Ralph is with us. Oh, I just hate Lieut. Roberts. It's an ugly old name, anyway."

"Hush, child, you don't realize what you are saying. But how will it be if I speak of father and see if he won't let you visit Ralph in camp? You could make the trip alone."

The happy suggestion brought a quick smile to the charming face which seldom failed to reflect cheerfulness. "You're a dear, dear mother, and if you can convince daddy to let me go, I'll give you exactly thirty-nine kisses." And as if making an advance deposit on the proposed payment, Mrs. Sommers received a generous portion of the amount due.

And because "daddy" was never so amiable as when he was about to refuse his daughter any request to her happiness, it was but a short week before Overland Limited swiftly bore the excited girl to the great cantonment, very proud of the responsibility of traveling unchaperoned, and her cup of happiness was quite filled to overflowing as Madeline Sommers, with chest inflated, placed on exhibition "My Sister" before the "kickers" standing with gaping mouths at the unusual vision of loveliness among their monotonous uniforms of khaki.

And Madeline loved to make the daily trip from town to camp, despite the tiresome, hard ride upon the rickety, ambling, one-line car—the only means of access to the camp. At the "Y" there was always a crowd of eager, mostly boys waiting about the piano for the magic music she could make with her fingers and voice, and other magic with her eyes. This night was the bugler's warning call of "rat-too" which sent her scurrying for the street car's last trip back to town, ably escorted to the car line by an immense dozen khaki-clad figures on each side.

Madeline turned to wave a pleasant good night from the platform, and as the conductor jangled the cord the car moved lumbering off. "Fare, please," came in the mechanical tone of habit. "Here, please!" It was gone! No, she remembered leaving it on top of the piano at the Y.M.C.A. How would she pay her fare? Would the conductor put her off? It was far to town and the night was dark.

"Pardon me madam, but may I assist you in your difficulty?" And as Madeline looked up she found the owner of the dulcet tones handing the conductor the necessary coin and saluting her with military precision.

"At first Lieutenant and decidedly good-looking," she thought as her eyes took in collar insignia and the features above. Aloud, "Thank you, sir; I am very grateful."

The officer bowed and moved up toward the front of the car. When he seated himself he found the young lady beside him.

A blush of faint pink suffused her cheeks. "I would like to repay you, sir."

"Don't be interrupted, holding up his hand: "I am glad to have been of assistance. Would you care to sit next to the window?"

Madeline accepted the courtesy, and because she did not know whether or not she should speak, and if she should what to say, she ran her fingers up and down the iron bars of the open window, humming the little tune of a popular air. She felt she really ought to make some arrangements to return the fare advanced.

"I should like to repay you, sir—" "Do you really want to repay?" he again interrupted, very excitedly, as if against his better judgment. And without giving her an opportunity to answer, "I've an invitation to a dance tonight, and don't know a female soul to ask. Will you come with me?"

Madeline looked around the car. There were no other passengers and she laughed out loud. "Sure," she gamely answered.

The ride had never seem so short, and both commented on the fact. It was just a moment before that the incident had happened and here they were already entering the spacious town from which, in the adjoining hall, they could see the dancing feet, keeping excellent rhythm with the saxophonist, who was not always certain if he were playing in two-four or three-four time. Madeline panted around on tiptoe, her eyes shining with excitement.

The officer watched the pretty girl anxiously. The opening notes of the band number started him from his seat, and with a guilty look of having caught a bad habit, he slipped smoothly over the

ent prayer of gratitude that the Lieutenant could dance so well, while it must be admitted the Lieutenant was trying the twin task of determining if the girl could dance better than she was pretty.

The closing strain of "Good Night, Ladies," regrettably ordered them to the checking room, and when he had escorted her to her hotel he asked permission to see her again. "Certainly," Madeline agreed, and as the chiming from the church near by sounded twice she flew into the waiting section of the revolving door.

The next morning she awoke with the premonition that something surprisingly pleasant would happen. And by way of preparedness her wardrobe for the day was selected with scrupulous care and judgment. As she entered the dining room many an eye approvingly took in her entire person, stopping to linger at the clear color of her cheeks and the happy twist of her lips. The light breakfast finished she passed out onto the stone terrace, and it seemed a sort of accepted fact to find the Lieutenant there.

"I thought you might like to go motoring this morning," he explained, "and perhaps after dinner you may care to visit the camp."

Madeline decided that daylight did not detract from the man's personality. "Delightful," she answered, and a delightful ride it was. Out on the country road speed did not lessen his careful driving. Twelve o'clock brought them to a hostelry in the valley, and to his other attributes Madeline added the knowledge how to order an excellent dinner. On arrival at camp the Lieutenant, now in his own element, became more engaging, but experienced disappointment that this most attractive girl should find any interest in the life and surroundings which meant so much to him.

But how was he to know that instead of being a novel experience it had been her daily programme for two weeks past? He racked his brain for an idea to arouse her lagging interest.

"I'll have my company drill with rifles," he suggested, "you'll like that." As they proceeded down the company street Madeline recognized a familiar figure coming toward them.

"Hello, sis," Ralph called out sliding his arm through hers as he saluted the officer. "Where did you meet Lieut. Roberts?"

"Lieut. Roberts?" Madeline exclaimed in a dazed manner. "Certainly not your Lieut. Roberts?"

"And don't you like this Lieut. Roberts?" the Lieutenant smilingly and wonderingly asked.

"When sis learned I couldn't come home on a furlough," Ralph explained. "She wrote me she hated even the name of Roberts."

"Do you think," the Lieutenant asked as his eyes eloquently pleaded his cause, "that Mrs. Roberts sounds like a very bad name?"

Madeline's laugh gurgled from her throat for joy. "On the contrary," she answered looking up archly at the straight figure, "I believe I shall find it very much to my liking."

The Lieutenant glanced down the

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CONFESSIONS OF A WAR BRIDE

CHAPTER.
SIXTY-SIXTH

I Become a Messenger to Carry Important Information to the East

Just why I should link up Bremer, Mary Thomas and the Lorimer Chemical Company, I couldn't explain. I knew that Bremer couldn't be anything but a spy and that he might have come to town in one of twenty plots. Excepting Certels, I must be the only person in town who had a line on his character. Mary although she might be used as a tool, was probably not important enough to get hold of any information which would incriminate him.

After lunching with the "queen of smiles," I bought a few articles in the hotel's millinery shop and then phoned Dr. Certels' office. He had not returned to town. I wanted to see if Bremer had checked out, but I was too shy to look over the wall. Plainly I had made a pretty poor beginning as a detective. I was walking down the half flight of stairs from the mezzanine floor to the lobby, when Bremer stepped aside to let me pass—exactly as he had done once before in the hold of the submarine!

He looked like one who sees a ghost of love—of dead love!

I certainly would not want to go through life like lots of girls do, imagining that all the men they meet fall in love with them. But every woman knows perfectly well when she has made an impression on a man. Wearing a wedding ring does

company street and saw his men standing rigidly at attention, their spotless rifles glistening in the mid-day sun.

"Sergeant," he called out, trying hard to conceal the happiness in his voice, "there'll be no drill today. Dismiss the company."

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not protect her from the knowledge. I certainly had made an impression on Bremer. I fancied he was going to speak, as we paused on the steps and I wonder if his heart was bumping as hard as mine was. It is evident that the man who had told me as he carried me up the conning tower that there wasn't another girl like me in the world—had done a lot of thinking about me since! As he probably had never heard my name, he would hardly question Mary Thomas about me. She would have no reason to mention me. This much at least I could trust to chance.

At dinner that night, when the dessert was on the table, and the man had left the room, Chrys looked up suddenly at her father and said, seemingly without reference to any thing in particular:

"Father, why not send Jane?"

And in about a second, Daddy Lorimer's cares seemed to drop away from him. He bestowed a look of admiration upon his daughter, then turned to me:

"Say, little girl! How would you like to go east, on business for the firm—and all alone?"

"Where—eh?" I whistled my answer. Daddy loves to have me play the tomboy.

"But let me see, young woman! Haven't I been paying you \$15 a week Goodness, gracious! That's about \$10

more than you're worth!" He went on in gay banter. "Well if you do this job right, I'll raise you—fifty cents a week!" Then he chuckled until his chair shook.

When we were quiet he spoke again this time seriously. "We've been trying to get a certain message to some parties on the coast, my dear. Twice the information has leaked. And, by the eternal, I'll get that pipe line yet. But—no more risks on this job. So, Jane, I'll give you the message—not a letter. And if it goes wrong, my child—the runs will have it in their power to blow up half the eastern seaboard!"

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